



**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 4-16-07\*\*\***

***From the Office of the Director of Health***

### **Immunizations Protect Children and Community**

During National Infant Immunization Week, April 21 – 28, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department encourages parents to protect their children and protect our community by ensuring their children are immunized.

Immunizations are one of the most important ways parents can protect their children from serious illness. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They protect the person who is immunized from developing potentially serious disease, and protect the entire community by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious agents.

“Children will need to be immunized against 14 diseases before age 2,” says Immunization Center coordinator Leslie Davis, RN. “We can now prevent more diseases than ever, so many parents aren’t aware of what it takes to fully immunize their child.”

To help parents learn which immunizations their child needs, and bring immunizations up-to-date, the health department will hold two special walk-in clinics on Thursday, April 26. The clinics will be held at the Westside Public Health Center, located at 660 S. Scenic, and will run from 9:00 am to 11:00 am, and 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. No appointment is necessary, but parents should bring their child’s immunization record with them. All immunizations that are required for child care or school entrance will be provided at no cost to the caregiver.

In addition, health department staff will be at the Dickerson Park Zoo April 22 from noon to 4:00 pm to visit with parents, check immunization records and make appointments to help parents get their children caught up on immunizations. Vaccinations will not be offered at the zoo. Children will receive prizes, and everyone who brings in a vaccination record will have a chance to win one of two \$25.00 WalMart gift cards.

“Keeping a record of your child’s immunizations is very important,” adds Davis. “We hope parents will take the opportunity during Infant Immunization Week to learn their child’s immunization status and bring it up-to-date.”

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